



Gedu College of Business Studies

Mentoring Handbook

2019

Assist to resources like grants, scholarships, journals, other knowledge

Mutually beneficial relationship

Expertise and information to share about core knowledge

Nurturing: Mentor provides support and encouragement

Transformative: Mentor helps student develop socio-emotional and cognitive skills

Open-minded: Receptive, safe learning

Reciprocal: Mentor and Student learn from each other

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Students must be ushered gently into intellectualism as individuals, not as anonymous members of a large and impersonal group. Each student has a future path to tread that needs to be jointly mapped out by professor and student.” (Vivian, 2005)

College is a developmental journey for the student and mentoring is a transformational process between mentor and student, where both socio-emotional and cognitive development is encouraged and supported. Using a *whole student* approach, the Gedu College Mentoring Program aims to facilitate the growth of GCBS students throughout their college experience. These guidelines provide a basis on which faculty mentors and students can develop an on-going relationship by meeting regularly and discussing matters relating to college success in a supportive environment.

2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Many Gedu College students enter college with little understanding of the complex landscape of higher education or what expectations there are for academic success and future career pathways. In fact, many GCBS students are unsure of what they will even do with a college degree. Mentoring is important, not only because of the knowledge and skills students can learn from mentors, but also because mentoring provides socialization and personal support that greatly enhances students' chances for success. Research shows that students who experience good mentoring “have a greater chance of finding employment, receiving financial support for graduate studies, exhibit greater productivity in research, and perform better in academic coursework.” (Bellows and Perry, 2005).

The quality of a students' college experience will make a meaningful difference in the quality of their life. Many students enter Gedu College with relatively little to no experience outside their villages and farms. They may need encouragement to speak up in class, to ask questions of their lecturers, or be coached on how to approach faculty members after class. It benefits them to know that college faculty members are approachable and open to having a conversation about a student's background, and their personal, academic and career interests. Sometimes such conversations have an immediate impact, motivating students to more fully pursue their studies.

“When students arrive at college, many feel they are entering an alien culture. First-generation college students face uncharted academic and social territory, a circumstance that can lead to unfulfilled expectations, self-doubt, and frustration.” (Hicks 2002).

“Students may have difficulty understanding and adapting to the college culture. This can lead to a lack of academic success, even for those who are academically prepared and capable.” (Freeman, 1999).

3. WHAT MENTORING IS...

Mentoring has specific tasks:

- Building trust
- Monitoring the student's performance
- Giving the student a voice
- Sharing knowledge of college
- Helping students acquire skills
- Correcting faulty perceptions
- Emphasizing positive goals

This guided journey is meant to force the student to become an individual—to map out an idea of self that is aware of limitations, as well as opportunities for development. Throughout this journey, a mentor can support, challenge, and provide vision to the student, to facilitate their transformation, self-reflection, and growth. The mentor also serves to encourage the student to take initiative in the transformative journey of college.

First, the student must be empowered to believe that he/she is capable of succeeding at the college level and can be an active participant rather than an observer or follower. Second, the student must recognize his or her rightful place as a member of the learning community. He or she must claim that place and the voice that goes with it. Third, the student must understand what he or she needs to do to be successful.

“For students who find college an alien environment, the most important element of this understanding is knowledge about the college system. Understanding the social, cultural, and systemic structures in the college environment helps students break down problems into manageable segments, so obstacles do not seem so overwhelming.” (Vivian, 2005).

4. WHAT MENTORING ISN'T...

Faculty members herding a large group of students along a set path, making sure students fulfill requirements for their major and file necessary papers, scolding students if their academic performance drops below an acceptable level.

“Assuming that a student needs assistance because of their weaknesses or deficits is detrimental to student growth and empowerment.” (Haring 1997, 1999; Piper and Piper 2000).

“Mentoring relationships are not meant to create dependency and subordination, promote elitism and exclusion, or act as a means of surveillance and control.” (McCormick 1997; Colley 2002). Students can be adversely affected by negative mentoring, which occurs when a mentor has low expectations of a student. This actually *reduces* the student's aspirations and performance.

Students may be perceived by faculty as passive, unmotivated and apathetic, if faculty lacks understanding of the circumstances confronting the students. The result is that overwhelmed

students in dire need of true mentoring often receive *counseling or warnings* instead of encouragement and tangible guidance.

Mentoring should never cross the line into a physical or sexual relationship.

Mentoring isn't counseling. Students with psychological issues such as grief, depression, anxiety, psychosis, substance abuse, thoughts of suicide, etc, should be referred to the Dean, college counseling center or Thimphu Hospital for assistance.

5. MENTOR GUIDELINES

- Start where the student is. Get to know them as an individual.
- Be curious - Ask about their interests, hobbies, family, as well as their college experiences.
- Show them you are human, approachable and reasonable.
- Give the student encouragement that they can do college level work.
- Hold high expectations for the student.
- Identify and point out the student's strengths.
- Encourage their questions.
- Look for areas where they don't understand the college process.
- Listen as much or more than you speak.
- Demystify college with information about what lecturers expect and want.
- Help them set goals toward learning specific skills and accomplishing specific tasks.
- Encourage the student to be an active participant in learning.
- Encourage communication with their lecturers, asking for what they need, etc.
- Reflect the student's behavior back to them to spark self-observation.
- Expect mistakes as part of the learning process.
- Guide students with understanding, patience, caring and compassion.

6. SUGGESTED STEPS FOR MENTORING

Set up an informal one-hour meeting time each week for the student to discuss whatever they desire.

Ask students to send you a weekly e-mail before your meeting, describing how things are going for the week.

During the weekly conversations, ask students things like, whether they enjoy being in college, how much they miss home, if they have any significant worries outside of academics, etc. Your weekly conversations can start with chit-chat about sports, friends, social activities, and eventually progress to the student describing their role and actions in class.

Identify any incomplete knowledge of the college system, where the student does not fully understand how it works.

The first meeting should focus on getting to know each other. Learning each other's interests and opinions helps build trust and understanding. Topics may include: "Tell me about your family", "What are your favorite hobbies?", "Where would you most want to travel to and why?", "What do you like best/least about being in college?" "Are you a morning or a night person?", "What is your dream job?", "Who is your hero?", etc.

Second meeting: Mentors could share some of their own college history, discussing a couple of anecdotes from their own college experience. For example: I wish I had known at the time The project I am most proud of is I am so glad I did/didn't A significant obstacle I overcame was Today's students should know

Both mentors and students should reflect on what is important to them and what drives them personally and academically. From this discussion, mentors can help students determine their personal strengths and any areas of skills or knowledge they want to improve or learn more about. The student should select three skills that their mentor can help them work on over the coming months. Mentors and students should brainstorm ideas and opportunities for assisting the student in developing these skills and knowledge.

7. POTENTIAL SKILLS FOR STUDENTS TO WORK ON

- Academic report writing
- Presentation and speaking skills
- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Leadership
- Taking Initiative
- Conflict resolution
- Writing job applications and interview skills
- 10 cores life skills

As the relationship develops, mentors may provide advice on the student's classroom experience, how to organize and write a paper, how to prepare for an exam, or how to make a presentation. Students may bring examples of their work so that mentors can provide feedback on assignments, topics in the media, specific classroom issues, etc.

Before the student graduates, mentors could take some time to focus on the career direction of the student. Students may want assistance from their mentor to clarify their preferred direction or to develop a career plan. It is important to evaluate an appropriate career direction based on the student's likes/dislikes, strengths and needs as well as skills, values and interests.

8. AVOIDING PITFALLS

Mentors need to be careful of unknowingly dominating conversation, exerting undue influence or discounting student opinions. Their role is to support and facilitate the student to take responsibility for their own independent problem solving and opinions. Mentors should help students work through the issues or alternatives to a topic and help them see the “big picture”, rather than offering their own solutions.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Topics discussed by mentors and students may be personal or controversial in nature, therefore strict confidentiality should be maintained between mentors and students.

10. BRINGING STUDENTS INTO COMMUNITY

“Social capital is maximized in a social system in which everyone is aware of the actions taken by all others. If a system has this kind of mutual awareness, a high degree of trust develops, and the community can reinforce desired behavior and quickly sanction negative behaviors.” (Coleman, 1988).

When students are mentored, they are no longer anonymous members of a crowd. They know they are being observed, and this knowledge sparks greater self-observation. This self-observation, in turn, generates a greater consideration of actions and consequences of those actions, giving students a greater sense of responsibility. The choices made by the students will come from a sense of loyalty to the mentor and the college community.

11. MENTOR AS STRANGER

Someone the student doesn't know well is more likely to be non-judgmental, is less likely to try and influence student decisions, and can be more neutral in fostering independence. When the students are observed by a stranger, they see themselves through strangers' eyes and are more objective than they otherwise might be. If a stranger-mentor presents situations or ideas that stimulate action, the action chosen by the student is more likely to be an attempt to create himself or herself, rather than following in the footsteps of the mentor.

It is not necessary to find a perfect match between mentor and student or cultivate an intense personal relationship. The various roles that a mentor fills don't need to be carried out by a single person. They can be shared among faculty, administrators, counselors, and peers.

12. MENTOR TRAITS

- Available to assigned students
- Knowledgeable about college systems
- Empathetic about student issues
- Non-judgmental
- Approachable
- Encouraging/Supportive
- Passionate about their field
- Good Listener
- Patient

13. MAKING REFERRALS

Young adults in college confront a myriad of social, academic, and psychological challenges. Students face pressures to achieve, become active on campus, and explore social groups, often while coping with being away from loved ones for the first time. Many students make the transition successfully, however, some fall into anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. Lecturers have a unique opportunity to serve as personal connections, informational resources, and professional role models for young adults. “Freshmen assigned to mentors show greater gains in problem solving, goal setting, and decision making compared to their non-mentored counterparts.” (Cosgrove, 1986).

Mentors can "catch students on the edge" (Castro, et al, 2005), or identify and reach out to students who may be on the fringe. Knowledge of the developmental issues of young adults is helpful, but ***mentoring faculty should not act as therapists***. Students in need of psychological services should be referred to the Dean, college counseling center or hospital.

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